AGENDA ITEM: Resource Libraries Program Development

GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATES:

At the November 2000 Board Meeting, staff reported on the Major Resource Libraries contacts meeting which had occurred in October 2000, and on plans to develop potential program elements for Board discussion and consideration

A small representative group from the Major Resource Libraries Group met in Sacramento on October 15 2001, to begin to outline potential structures and contexts for a resource libraries program. This group was not intended to fully represent resource libraries; rather, it was a small working group to assist staff to begin to address current issues. The meeting agenda was purposefully loose to allow the opportunity to develop an agenda for future action and investigation.

Resulting from this meeting were the following areas in which participants saw the greatest potential benefit of the Library of California to resource libraries. These included:

- Communication, so vital to sharing and cooperation, is a prime issue. By creating opportunities for communicating, the Resource Libraries can effectively participate in the development of both the Resource Libraries and the statewide reference programs.
- Collaborative database purchase and database price negotiation are of particular interest to these libraries. Not only would their users benefit from increased access at reduced cost, but should smaller libraries also be able to afford databases, then their users might not need the resources of other libraries to answer their questions.
- Increasing the reimbursement for interlibrary loan continues to be of high concern to resource libraries, and they encourage the continued efforts to identify current and potential program costs.
- Support in creating and enforcing standards, including standards for collecting and compiling information on special resources, is a very important issue.
- Preservation, including "last copy" storage, digitization, and disaster recovery should be coordinated, and the LoC appears to be the logical entity to do so.

In addition, several over-arching considerations were discussed. These included:

- Building on existing structures rather than creating new ones for new projects is highly encouraged. If the California Digital Library or the Librarian's Index to the Internet could be used and enhanced to provide access to additional electronic resources, this was preferable to creating new and redundant structures.
- Inclusion of all types of libraries in program development is essential, and identification of involvement of resource library functions is also an important part of program development.

- The definition of what a resource library is may not be as important as identifying roles of libraries in program areas. Programs such as reference and preservation will, by their nature, identify and define libraries of last resource, and this may be definition enough for these particular programs.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will study issues brought forward and provide feedback to this resource libraries task group and all libraries identified so far as potential resource libraries. Staff anticipates additional meetings with either this task group or a larger resource libraries group as program areas are developed.

RELATED ISSUES TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD IN THE FUTURE:

1. Update on development of the Resource Libraries component, including the development of possible pilots for testing elements of this program.

2. Consideration of models and pilots for funding the Resource Libraries program components.

Relevant Committee: Access Services
Staff Liaison: Diana Paque

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